

Michael F. Easley  
Governor



## State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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### **NORTH CAROLINA WINS NATIONAL CLEAN AIR AWARD**

*Gov. Easley's Clean Smokestack's Law Honored by EPA*

**RALEIGH** – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency tonight presents North Carolina its national Clean Air Excellence Award in recognition of the state's innovative Clean Smokestacks Act aimed at reducing multiple air pollutants.

Secretary Bill Ross, of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, will accept the award on behalf of Gov. Mike Easley and a coalition of state, business and environmental groups, in Washington, D.C., today.

"North Carolina is helping to lead the charge to cleaner air, and we are honored to receive this recognition from EPA," Easley said. "We have taken aggressive action to combat air pollution and are committed to do whatever is necessary to protect our residents and our natural resources."

Just last week, North Carolina filed a petition calling for the EPA to require 13 upwind states to reduce their air pollution. Reducing these emissions will also substantially improve air quality in North Carolina.

Easley and legislators fought hard for the landmark Clean Smokestacks Act in 2002, providing a nationwide model for controlling multiple air pollutants from coal-fired power plants. The legislation requires power companies to reduce their emissions by three-fourths over the coming decade.

Various stakeholders were involved in developing the legislation, which was sponsored by Sen. Martin Nesbitt and former state Sen. Stephen Metcalf. Negotiations were spearheaded by Easley and included representatives from power companies, environmental groups, the legislature, state agencies, electric ratepayers' associations, non-utility industry groups and the state utilities commission.

Under the act, coal-fired power plants must achieve a 77-percent cut in nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions by 2009 and a 73-percent cut in sulfur dioxide (SO2) emissions by 2013. These emissions cuts should lead to significant reductions in ozone, haze, fine particles and acid rain. Although the act does not set caps on mercury, the controls needed to meet the NOx and SO2 limits will reduce mercury emissions substantially.

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